

The Answer To The Armory Issue

MAYOR H. H. BAXTER'S announcement that he intended to initiate a new movement for building an auditorium and civic center reached this desk at a moment when the temperature was several degrees higher than the 77 recorded by the Weather Bureau, and the end of an exasperating tussle with the problem presented by the National Guard in its occupation of the Armory.

There was, it seemed, no complete solution to the issue raised by the Guard in its demand to take over the Armory ground floor permanently and the main auditorium of the Young Men's Association. It was inadvisable that the Guard needed the facilities it requested, that it was entitled to them under the law establishing the Armory and that the city offered no other adequate quarters for the Guard. It was also clear that a decision in favor of the Guard, over the protests of the Park & Recreation Commission, would leave the teen-agers out in the cold, or rather in the July heat, until the clubhouse could be constructed for them and deprive other citizens of considerable pleasure in the months ahead. It has been estimated that the Guard's use of the auditorium would curtail other operations in the building to the point of reducing annual attendance by 65,000.

Then someone suggested that the National Guard might use the Armory which the Navy Department is building here and the Naval Reserve unit. That called for a stroll beyond the underpass on Sixth Street for an inspection of this new building.

which still is in the process of construction. This still yielded the impression that the Naval Armory will not provide enough room for National Guard drills and it also brought the advice, from a Navy man, that it was unlikely that the Army would be welcomed there, due to the recent action in Washington for unification of the services.

On returning, we read the story of Mayor Baxter's hopeful plan and realized what a simple matter the problem presented by the Armory actually was. And we wondered why such an answer to this urgent question hadn't been made by the people of Charlotte long ago. We still are wondering why anyone would read the story in *THE NEWS* listing some of the important activities besides the Youth Center and the National Guard that have been discommodored or discouraged by the inadequate facilities must have wondered too. The Community Concert Association and the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra were reported to be having difficulty obtaining the Armory on desired dates. The building, erected in 1929 by a hurry for civilian club use, and veterans, is used up and down stairs every day and the demand rises with the city's growth.

The little drama of the conflict between the teen-agers and the guardians certainly is sufficient notice that the problem has advanced beyond the stage where the Armory auditorium will so if we don't mind the inconvenience and the loss of civic pride. It barely met the city's needs eighteen years ago and it doesn't seem to be good enough on any count for the Charlotte of 1947.

Dewey does Something Else

GOVERNOR THOMAS E. DEWEY has returned to his native state of Michigan, tactfully avoiding political conferences in the hands of his backers. He has been a formidable contender for the 1948 Republican nomination for President. As the Governor settles down in Owosso for what we suspect will be the most restful days of his "vacation" tour, Dr. George Gallup's pollsters report that President Truman holds a 51-49 per cent advantage over the youthful New Yorker in a Presidential "trial heat".

Dr. Gallup's statistics will be heartily welcomed by Governor Dewey's backers, as well as by those who in the past few weeks have vaulted about the Dewey bandwagon, more out of respect for New York's 47 electoral votes than from personal conviction for the 1944 candidate. The figures indicate Dewey's tremendous popularity sixteen months before the election; and the two per cent Truman advantage might easily be interpreted as a rebuke to the President. The President will continue to be in a vulnerable political spot while Dewey coyly avoids the limelight in Albany.

It is conceivable, however, that the Republicans may misinterpret the mood of the country in allowing Dewey to obtain the Republican nomination by default a second time. While the silence on national affairs which has slightly mellowed the mood may make the Governor a popular candidate than Senators Taft and Vandenberg or Governor Stassen, Republicans will not find it easy to prevent voters from associating the record they have compiled in Congress.

The 1948 campaign is liable to be based on issues, rather than personalities, for the

first time since the beginning of the Roosevelt era. As was not the case during the 1936-40 campaign, voters will cast their ballots on the records of the two parties rather than their like, or dislike, for the President. The Republican record in the current session of Congress, with the possible exception of the Taft-Hartley Law which may yet be repealed, is hardly one which will prove attractive to independent voters who may hold the balance of power. Some political observers have declared that the Republican leadership is being tempted "socialist" until the 1948 session in order to make the greatest political capital of such legislation during the campaign; even so, the voters are not all likely to be fooled when the Old Guard begins to concern itself about the public welfare.

Should the Republicans fail to push through some politically attractive legislation in the next session, only the nomination of a candidate of such liberal stature as Harold Stassen would bear much weight with independent voters. (The Gallup poll also indicated this week that 10 per cent of those questioned had not made up their minds whether President Truman or Governor Dewey.) From all indications, the Old Guard will never be able to stomach Stassen; yet if it fails to make some concession to the liberal vote in the next Congress, and then pushes Dewey through at the convention next June, it may cast aside the best chances for a Republican victory since 1928.

WPB, and Mr. Meigs, didn't think much of the flying boat, but while not actually subjected to undue political pressure, approved it anyway. WPB, it seems, read a great potential threat into the fact that the flying boat was connected with a private project. If the agency rejected the flying boat, Mr. Meigs said, there was great danger that Mr. Kaiser would take his case to the people. He was concerned in publicity, and he regarded himself as a public man. (He) sounded good to the man in the street, Mr. Meigs testified.

Thus the villain in the piece turns out to be not the flying boat, but the man in the street, stood at the bureaucratic elbow

War And The Man In The Street

THE investigation of Howard Hughes and his fabulous flying boat, with its dancing girls and round-the-world press agents, has already alerted from the realm of the probable, but not the actual, through the looking glass one Merrill Meigs, a former War Production Board official, presented testimony which should be preserved for posterity.

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Another Voice

Straws In The Wind

IF 1945 the farm debt as represented by mortgages reached the lowest point in 30 years. In 1923, when the full effect of the collapse of prices after the first World War began to be felt, the total of farm mortgages was \$10,800,000,000. Of all the many factors that played part in the economic disaster which came in 1929, this farm debt was the greatest.

It represented the human folly that believed 40-cent cotton and 82-wheat were here to stay. They were not. They were worth twice, thrice or four times the price of pre-war times.

American agriculture went broke under the load of debt, assumed in boom times. There was a little appreciable recovery from the crash and depression, but billions poured out in largesse by the first and

second Roosevelt Administrations, until Germany attacked Poland in 1939 and set off another World War. But by Jan. 1, 1946, the owners of American farm lands had more than twice the total outstanding mortgage mortgages than in 1923. They cut it to \$5,080,000,000.

Eighteen months ago the tide of debt liquidation ceased, and a tide of borrowing began. The June 30-60 cent cotton and 82-wheat. The farm mortgage debt was increased \$179,000,000 in 1946.

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Samuel Grafton

Preview For 1948

ONE way of previewing next year's Presidential election is to speculate on how it will look to 21-year-olds, to young men and women casting their first votes.

It may look a little dull to them, Mr. Dewey, for example, may still seem young and vital to voters who are no longer good insurance risks. But he has been Governor of New York twice and he definitely takes him out of the boy class. The first voter of next year has not really lived through Mr. Dewey's racial prejudices of 1944, or so, so that episode, to him, is just something he has read about, like the Spanish Armada. He may not even remember any other Governor of New York, since Mr. Dewey took office when the coming first vote was about fifteen years old.

Mr. Dewey will have to find other ways to appeal to youth, but one doubts that his careful strategic cross-country trips can start tongues wagging 20 years in the future.

There is a chance of course, that Mr. Vandenberg might be the candidate. He is a fairly interesting figure, a man who started life as a sort of isolationist, then came to the mountain bench, and changed over. That's kind of dramatic to those Americans who take it a little easy, these days, climbing stairs.

But one wonders if to the first voters the whole isolation-intervention argument doesn't feel almost as ancient as the controversy which attended the initial publication of Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle." Most of the debate about isolation occurred in 1936-1940, when the first voter was thirteen years old. God! Can that be possible?

THEN there is Mr. Truman, who is perhaps really their friend. He is a man who has been in a way in which he can't quite be for our older boys, who think of him as Roosevelt's inheritor. But it may not be good for Mr. Truman that the young people don't remember Roosevelt too clearly. They may not have our own, older hope of seeing a Roosevelt spirit alive, and the young ones may either not vote at all, or they may tend to conform more easily to false voting patterns.

It is somewhat harder to visualize a young man defying Dad to vote for Mr. Truman than it was to see him making disapproval on behalf of Mr. Roosevelt.

HOW to bring a dull election alive is perhaps, then, even more of a problem for the Democrats than for the Republicans during the war, staffed with servants that touch that brings a play alive, or a piece of fiction, or a speech, that wonderful something which makes a direct bid to the generous heart and the sound imagination. Perhaps housing could do it, or racial matters, implementation of the Marshall Plan. One's surmise.

It must be strange to be a first voter at this time without even that capital of hope which we older ones have seen in the eyes of the young. We remember the excitement about making this into One World, and a better one. It isn't a bad guide to the first voter to life. If the way isn't found, it will be a dreary grayation we shall go through next year.

The young may still vote but without remembering.

WASHINGTON
CIX months ago, George C. Marshall shall become Secretary of State to the accompaniment of such salvoes of praise as are rarely accorded any public figure. As Chief of Staff during the war, he had won a towering reputation.

Having completed his temporary assignment in China, General Marshall's desire was to retire to his country home at Leavenworth. He was 66 years old. He looked forward to well-earned peace and to his later years.

At President Truman's urging, he accepted the post. Some of us were fearful, at the time of his appointment, that the salvoes of praise were too extravagant. To make him sound like a miracle-worker in view of what he faced, was a disaster.

But after six months of stress and strain, of trial and testing, Marshall's reputation has grown large. It has been a crowded six months with events pressing one upon the other, beginning with the Moscow conference.

BEYOND MAGIC
Secretary Marshall has not by any magic released the fundaments before he took office. Those who understood the realities of the situation, it is possible never believed that he could bring about an overnight change.

Why he has done in six months is to present the world with an alternative to chaos and catastrophe. The conservative, who shies at Harvard University speed, has been astonishing.

Merchants and representatives of sixteen European nations are meeting in Paris to try to agree on a plan for European reconstruction. Equally important is the fact that it has spurred the Soviet Union to accept the Marshall Plan.

Just as the British-Soviet trade negotiations seemed about to end in complete failure, there was a change of heart in Moscow and the British have now been promised a million tons of wheat from Russia.

The Marshall plan may fail. It may fail because the cooperation between East and West settles into a competition for bigger and better armaments. That would be a failure, more immediately, because of the division in the Government in

being 1948, especially, as the year in which they cast their first ballots, they will recall it, instead, as the year in which the country was brought to its knees, and in which, Dad, either made or lost some money. That will be a petty way to fix in memory the year of the first Presidential election after the biggest of wars.

WASHINGTON
The letter by St. Philip D. Keif of Pope Field in Raleigh, N.C., that he was definitely been reached. Our people do know Mr. Keif's story. In accomplishing this, *THE NEWS* has been most helpful. In fact, a major factor. My own and the Board's view is confirmed by friends and acquaintances everywhere. I go.

All of us connected with Mr. Keif and the campaign with you well.

—C. H. GOVER, Chairman, Mercy Advisory Board.

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Marquis Childs
Truman's Big Asset

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WASHINGTON

THE just finished session of the 80th Congress leaves behind one political legacy: how conservative is the Republican Party. It has been bitterly re-examined in the House and the Senate. A good many Republicans in Congress like a good many Southern Democrats, are convinced that the party should not be judged by its historic triumphs and failures, but by the prospects for 1948-1950 to know where the true Republican average lies.

The peculiar nature of the Republican strategy makes the problem difficult. Knowing that the Republican record in Congress would be judged by the voters in the next election, the party's Congressional leaders tacitly agreed on a strategy which placed the party in a position to be judged by its historic triumphs and failures, but by the prospects for 1948-1950 to know where the true Republican average lies.

There is no space here to describe the sagas of railroad lobby politics who have pushed the Bulwinkle and Reed bills and all the others. The main effort of this Congress has shown a remarkable responsiveness to special-interest groups. It is a record which is deeply feared by such wise Republicans as the late Senator New York. It poses a strikingly different problem for such leaders as Senator Taft. The main effort of this Congress has shown a remarkable responsiveness to special-interest groups. It is a record which is deeply feared by such wise Republicans as the late Senator New York. It poses a strikingly different problem for such leaders as Senator Taft.

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Washington between Republicans and Democrats, and the deeper issue of whether the balance we must play a part in the world and those who believe our only security is in the balance will not be the fault of the author of the plan. It will come from the failure to control of any individual.

CREDIT SHARED
The credit for the Marshall plan is shared by many more than most public figures. Marshall does not claim all the credit for what has been achieved. His chief staff, headed by George F. Kennan, has had a lot to do with shaping the Marshall plan. The fact remains, however, that it was Marshall who initiated the plan and that it was Kennan who shaped the plan and that it was the plan of the ablest man in the department.

One of the few critical attacks on Marshall followed his return from Moscow. An inspired newspaper story said he had been too aloof at the Moscow conference and that other members of the delegation for their help and counsel. Those who watched Marshall in the house of this charge. While he is naturally reserved, he made every effort to include the colleagues in all important discussions.

Almost inevitably, with politics to the fore, the view of the President's position is recorded with the Republican opposition. He is by all odds President Truman's greatest asset.

ABOVE POLITICS
In his own part, Secretary Marshall has done everything he could from the beginning to keep politics out of the picture. He considers himself a non-political agent of all the American people.

As a politician he occupies today is not unlike that which Cordell Hull held as Secretary of State. He is a man who has been in the house of the Republic since the beginning of the war. He is a man who has been in the house of the Republic since the beginning of the war. He is a man who has been in the house of the Republic since the beginning of the war.

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