

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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COST OF GOING FORWARD

LAST week Rep. Robert Lassiter Jr. of Mecklenburg, one of the few members of the General Assembly who have stood their ground in the face of insistent demands for deficit financing of State services, made a brief, pungent address before the House which held a vivid warning for the State.

The speech was not widely publicized. It should have been. Mr. Lassiter pointed out that the bulk of State revenue is now coming from income taxes, corporate and personal, and the budget tax, and there is no possibility, in a period of recession, of their producing more money.

The corporate taxes, he said, have reached such a high limit that North Carolina is no longer competitive in this respect. "Not even the Governor has included a recommendation for higher corporate taxes," he said. Income taxes are also uncomfortably high, above the average state level, and the people will not approve a higher rate.

It is almost impossible politically to raise the sales tax, he added. On the contrary, past Legislatures have exempted so many items that a straight two per cent levy on all products would net as much as the present exemption-riddled three per cent.

"I foresee only one source of revenue for the State to support a school building program in addition to the other services—and that is a State land tax return to the ad valorem levy which we abandoned in 1935," he told the House.

Not only is such a tax an unfair method of collecting money, since it does not reflect ability to pay, but it will lessen the

ability of counties and cities to support their own services, Mr. Lassiter said. The only other source would be a few nuisance taxes—on soft drinks, tobacco products, amusements and the like—which hit the poor man proportionately harder than the wealthy man.

"This General Assembly is using up all the anticipated revenue, plus all the accumulated surplus, without giving any thought to where new revenue is coming from. Under the circumstances, I cannot vote for the school bond issue," the Mecklenburger concluded.

The warning was not heeded, for the House shortly thereafter approved a \$14 million bond issue on its second reading by an overwhelming majority. But the questions Mr. Lassiter raised should be answered.

The crux of the matter is that this General Assembly, if it goes along with the Scott program, will spend every penny of surplus and anticipated revenue for the coming biennium. The appropriations measure as now drawn will use the \$50,000,000 in surplus and \$20,000,000 which the State does not have for current expenditures. That amounts to \$100,000,000 a year over and above the anticipated revenue. Not even considered in these calculations is the several million dollars a year to retire the proposed school bond issue.

Failure to vote the necessary taxes to produce this revenue simply means that the State will have to face the most urgent problem of a serious deficit.

It is a short-sighted, and dangerous, policy which will change North Carolina's financial condition from the best in history to the worst.

KLAN STRIKES AGAIN

THE South has a two-fold assignment if it ever wishes to stamp out Ku Klux Klanism:

- 1. It must overcome the racial and religious hatreds and prejudices upon which the evil Klan thrives; and
- 2. It must put an end to flagrant violations of the law.

The first is a long-time proposition, a matter of developing the mind and the heart to an understanding and tolerance of other races. There is no place in this country for any organization that has hidden the faces of its members behind a white sheet or any other kind of cover.

It would be just as impossible to outlaw the Klan as it is to outlaw the Communist Party. If we must have it at all, let it stay out in the open.

But it is impossible for the South to limit, by the force and unmitigated disapproval, the effectiveness of the Klan and to punish with severe penalties any infringement of law and order traceable to the Klan or any other similar organization.

PICKETING THE PICKETS

ONCE a mad inventor devised a small chromium-plated gadget which would allow a toothpick, olive bottle opener, shoehorn, surgical scalpel, jux box key, knitting-needle, hatpin, buttonhook, finger-ring, ice cube dislodger, swizzle stick, and any other kind of pickster. It was also handy to have in the event of attack by wild animals.

But much to the sorrows of his friends and supporters he never put the device on the market. Despite his intense desire to advance the cause of civilization and lighten the work-load of the common man, he knew when he was licked.

A far better product was already available—the technical pickster. For versatility, gentleness, reader, give us the pickster anytime.

What cannot a pickster do? What, indeed, can keep people from seeing movies, can keep musicians from playing pianos,

nos, it can keep people from getting into a plant, it can keep people from getting out of a plant, it can keep people from buying Samson copra or Abyssinian herbs, it can keep people from reading Kathleen Winsor or Friedrich Nietzsche, it can keep people from making speeches, it can keep people from buying loan sharking, it can keep people from listening to Winston Churchill, Henry Wallace, Ernest Bevin, or Charlie Chaplin, it can keep people from watching a movie based on "Oliver Twist" or it can keep them from seeing Mickey Mouse.

What hasn't it done? One thing: One thing only, it hasn't kept people from picketing.

Oh, citizens! Your duty is clear. The only way to rid mankind of the lawless device of picketing is to picket the picksters. Pick up your placards at the nearest pickster line and your foot powder at the nearest cat-eat drug store.

Duty calls.

\$324,000 to get them done at the Government Printing Office. The commercial concern upped the price for each volume to 4,000, let the OSD have its 400 copies at a cost of only \$684,000 instead of \$324,000.

But that's not all. The Government has just received a check for \$34,268.61 as 1948 royalties on the print run which has been sold to industry and to the public, and will continue to draw royalties, not to mention what it gets in taxes from the profits from commercial concerns.

Before the Government will (1) make money on the deal, and (2) get the reports more widely distributed than otherwise would have been the case. It would appear that the printing process could be followed in publishing reports and studies at a big savings to the taxpayers.

A new excuse? "But, ma'am, President Truman said it!"—Memphis (Tenn.) Press-Scimitar

Balloon Man



Why The System Works

Interview With A Bootlegger

(Following is an article, ghost-written by a Gastonian, following an interview with a Gaston County bootlegger. The article is merely an insight into the thinking of one engaged in a business outside the law.—Editor.)

I AM a Gaston County bootlegger! Everybody knows it. Even the Federal Government knows it. The Treasury Department sends a man around every year and forces me to purchase liquor dealer's licenses. I am shunned by polite society, and my name is barred from the tongues of wit. But when the public gets thirsty, it beats a path to my door.

On my premises all men are equal, and they come in from all walks of life—the white collar and the denims, the civic pillars and the unchurched. They enter freely and they depart hastily. But they come nevertheless.

I take no pride in my profession, and I hold no brief for the liquor traffic. Any way you look at it, whiskey is bad business. I sincerely believe that every dram of alcoholic beverage sold better off every middle of the ocean. But I see no prospect of any such great dumping taking place.

I sell liquor because I have to eat. I grew up without learning a trade. And my health won't permit strenuous manual labor. I am so uncoordinated to work now, physically and by disposition, that I wouldn't go to a doghouse at it.

Also, I know that liquor abounds wherever man goes. Gaston County is certainly no exception. Bootleggers seem and there in this so-called "oasis of civility." Even a stranger can buy a pint here without being asked for identification papers. People frequently say to me:

"Now you don't need to tell me that you're not bootlegging. You just couldn't center those people unless you were creating somebody's pain!" There's a good point in arguing with these peeps. This I can think anything like for years, and I have found that the only way to get out of my "hush money" can't do you much good anyway. Furthermore, I wouldn't trust him any farther than I could see his teeth at the end of a lead.

I REMEMBER one time several years ago, when I was stopped by ex-Sheriff Clyde Robinson and a deputy. I was carrying a load of non-tax-paid white wine.

There I was, caught with the goods, and there was the usual scene. The deputy held the bottle and the publicity-formal man made the bond suggestion perfectly willing to pay five hundred or a thousand dollars for the lot.

So I asked Sheriff Robinson what my bond would be, and he said he didn't know. He said I would have to come along with him to the court office. Then I suggested that maybe he could set my bond for me, and he said he would do it for me when the case was called and let the bond stand for me.

Sheriff Robinson got very red in the face and he was a very angry man. "Are you trying to bribe me?" he asked.

Well, the sheriff took me to town and threw me into the County Jail. I reckon I just talked too much. Probably, if I hadn't made the bond suggestion, he would have set a bond and let me go. I don't know.

Another thing I know for sure. There's no use in attempting to bribe Police Chief Earl Elliott of Gastonia. I admire him as a straightforward man.

I have no man on my payroll. I have, at one time or another, passed out a pint of liquor to this man and the city of Gastonia. But I never gave away any with the motive of bribery. And I'm sure none was ever accepted in that vein. The officers who would refuse to take me and turn me in because of a pint of liquor would be a fool. I would not expect a man to jeopardize his job for a bottle.

Suppose the chief sent an officer to raid my premises. Suppose I had liquor on hand and that officer refused to see it. Why, the chief could send me another warrant for my right on the heels of the first one, and maybe the second delegates would find the liquor. Then what would happen to the first man who neglected to find the cache?

No, there's no bribery and no paying off as far as I am concerned. The officers have done their duty as regards me, but the North Carolina law, as my own preparations have shielded me.

I WOULD like to censure policemen who are unable to arrest anybody but drunkards. Some of them make an absolute specialty of this, and are unqualified to solve anything more complicated. Just witness the untold numbers of break-ins that have accumulated in Gaston County.

One night recently I was in a certain eating place when the proprietors started to prepare to close the bulk of the customers had departed, but she wanted her drink. Furthermore, she had just come across the road from her establishment. When she heard the door open, she started across the street to her car. Two burly officers sprang from ambush and took her into custody.

It was a hell of a jamming no one, and in just a few steps would have been safely inside her own house (where the law permits you to drink to your heart's content). Now, why couldn't those officers have let her get inside her home? Instead, they searched her and threw out a cell. I called the office and asked if I might go to a cell. It was informed that nobody was there who could be held in the cell. The fact that she was a woman had to spend the night in jail. She is a very substantial woman with no police record. She was harrased no end and the fact that she was a woman made it seem even more cruel. Such a thing would never be tolerated in the better cities of the nation.

I hold no brief for drunkenness. A person who has drunk to the extent that he is unable to care for himself is a public nuisance. He is a danger to himself and to the community, and he is a person who ought to be locked up for "his own good" until he is sober and able to care for himself. The reason are often overstepped in the enforcement of the law.

I do not call my own business reasonable nor even honest. It is a hell of a racket, and it is growing up between the west area they are talking about and the east area. The Russian people must not see what goes on outside and the fact that the union secretary is inside the "dark" domain.

However, it is worth noting that the way things now stand, it is within the range of possibility that there might be a change in the composition of some Western statesmen like Britain's Foreign Secretary Bevin are likely to be replaced by a man who once the Atlantic Pact becomes effective, Moscow will demand Russia's expansion in Europe has ended and the Kremlin may seek a truce.

Joseph And Stewart Also

Mr. Churchill's Riddle

IT is not often that Winston Churchill speaks to the people. He did not do so at Fulton, where his brilliant speech about the "Iron Curtain" was the woolly minded into agonizingly thoughtful. But at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, last week, he chose to wrap up the hard, terrible kernel of his meaning in such a way that his audience actually escaped attention.

Perhaps he chose to do this because what he was really saying was so terrible, so unpalatable, that even the present-day believers in the Iron Curtain come to see plain words again. But Mr. Churchill being Mr. Churchill, it is none the less important to extract this kernel of his meaning from his rich philosophical wrapping.

The significant passages of the great MIT speech came at the close. In a rousing and eloquent series of judgments, Mr. Churchill broke through the "Iron Curtain" barrier. First: the Soviet Union now confronts us with "something quite as wicked but in some ways more terrifying than Hitler." The Soviet Government is "pursuing imperialist expansion." "Can Russia actually ever die?"

Second: only the deterrent of the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States, we are safe for the present, but our practices must be changed radically and soon. Or, when the "not unlimited period" of our present bombing campaign expires, we must force a preventive strike, leading if need be to preventive war, in order to avert a settlement with the Kremlin. When this will be necessary, we must be prepared to use the temporary American monopoly on the atomic energy, in short, three nuclear bombs.

There is also a serious, public suggestion—dim and roundabout in the original statement, but which may ultimately be necessary to counter the Soviet menace. Coming from anyone but the Congress, the figure of the West, so startling a suggestion should be regarded as a philosophy, may later seem as definite a turning point as the all too prophetic speech at Fulton.

DeWitt MacKenzie

Does Russia Want In?

IF Russia doesn't like being out of the Atlantic Pact, why doesn't she try to get in?

A student of foreign affairs wants to know if it is possible to get into a good question to ask but not an easy one to answer. I suppose he is asking the question because of the Soviet memorandum in the Soviet newspaper in which the Soviet Union is asked to join the Atlantic Pact by the fact that this treaty is directed against the Soviet Union.

It is worth noting that the Atlantic Pact is a treaty which was created by the fact that the Soviet Union is a Communist aggression in Europe. In that sense the alliance may be said to be directed against the Soviet Union.

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Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

I LOCKED in the files of the Treasury and Justice Departments is starting to help the President's man clean up a serious scandal. Few union members know about the situation inside their union, which if not removed may cost them a lot of hard-earned money.

The secret evidence pertains to the income-tax violation of Alva Berry, a member of the International Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, and Senator from Tennessee. Berry, guilty of income-tax violation, refused to defend himself, was given one year in jail, and two children were committed to five years on parole. Before one year had passed Berry died, leaving a will which may continue the frauds he pulled on his own union.

Had the Government been able to try the case in open court, these frauds would have been held publicly and union members could have taken corrective steps. But Berry, afraid of a public trial, threw himself on the mercy of the court.

However, this column has been able to obtain details of the frauds which Berry pulled not only against the Government, but his own union.

Two Mrs. Berrys

BERRY'S will reveals that he left parts of property which he supposedly belonged to the union to two Mrs. Berrys. One was his own wife. The other was a mysterious Mrs. Alva N. Berry, who was supported by Berry on one of his farms and with whom Berry spent part of his later years. To Mrs. Alva N. Berry, the will gave \$100,000, plus the name of the property, which she owned in the name of Mrs. Berry, he left the farm on which she lived, plus fifteen shares of the Citizens' Savings Bank, and a large amount of cash, valued at more than \$150,000, most important of all, the right to the International Playing Card & Label Co.

Pressman's Union Left In Bad Shape

By Berry to the union, but to the two Mrs. Berrys and his close associates.

Mrs. Berry, the wife, was given part of the playing-card company. Mrs. Alva N. Berry, who was supported by Berry on one of his farms and with whom Berry spent part of his later years. To Mrs. Alva N. Berry, the will gave \$100,000, plus the name of the property, which she owned in the name of Mrs. Berry, he left the farm on which she lived, plus fifteen shares of the Citizens' Savings Bank, and a large amount of cash, valued at more than \$150,000, most important of all, the right to the International Playing Card & Label Co.

Yet the playing-card company was property which belonged to the union and which Berry had no right to give away.

During the Government's probe of Berry's income taxes, some peculiar things came to light regarding the union's financial affairs. Berry had taken \$50,000 out of the playing-card company to buy to buy for his own farm.

When Treasury agents began digging into Berry's company, he claimed that he had invested large sums of his own money in the playing-card company. Yet on the other hand, he admitted that he had received \$50,000 from the company to buy to buy for his own farm.

Berry's World Bookkeeping

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How To Get In White House

MASTEN LARSON of St. Paul, chosen as "Driver Of The Year" by America's most important newspaper, Jimmy, that he was not given him by the President of the United States.

The other day when Mr. and Mrs. Larson called at the White House, they were met by the President's secretary, "My boy, Jimmy, tells me he has learned the secret of how to get in the White House. He says he's going to become a truck driver, and he's going to get in the White House."

"That's a good idea," the President said. "But if he doesn't want to wait that long, he can get in to see me by using this pen I'm sending him as a free pass to the White House."