THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

THOMAS L. ROBINSON ..... Publisher
J. R. DOWD ..... General Manager
B. S. GRIFFITH ..... Executive Editor
G. A. McKNIGHT ..... Editor

MONDAY, MAY 30, 1949.

SCHOOL BOND ISSUE—V

LAST week Governor Scott told a Charlotte audience that the $25 million school bond issue is "just a beginning . . . We'll be back asking for more."

His point: that N. C. school buildings are in such a woeful condition that still more State aid will be necessary in years to come.

Once you accept the fundamental principle that the State should collect revenue from all counties on an ability-to-pay basis and then reallocate it to school building projects, you must accept the Governor's thesis that the $25 million bond issue is just the first step.

Yet it is a big step, and one which Governor Scott is asking the people to take without telling them where it ultimately leads.

• • • •

WHEN the school bond issue was being debated in the House this Spring, Rep. Robert Lassiter Jr. of Mecklenburg County asked each proponent a set of questions:

1. Have you figured out what it will cost each year to retire these bonds?

2. Have you considered where the money is coming from to retire them?

3. Have you made any plans to levy new taxes in order to retire these bonds?

Speaker after speaker replied in the negative. It was clearly evident that they were willing for the State to take over a major new financial liability and put off worrying about the cost until some future date.

That is what the people are being asked to rubber-stamp on June 4. Before they do so, they should realize what the long-range financial implications are.

• • • •

KEEP in mind that the 1949 General Assembly voted to spend *all* the State surplus, plus *all* the revenue anticipated during the next biennium. As a matter of fact, appropriations ran *more* than anticipated revenue by some $6 million, leaving the State general fund facing a deficit of that amount.

The $25 million in school bonds will be levied against the general fund. If they are sold immediately, the carrying charges for almost two fiscal years will have to be added to that $5 million deficit.

This small bond issue, by itself, will not present an insuperable obstacle to a balanced budget. But if it is Governor Scott's intention, as he stated last week, to go even further into the school building business, the thing takes on a different look.

The major portion of State general fund revenue comes from income taxes, corporate and personal, and from the sales tax.

It would appear unlikely that the corporate tax could be increased, since it is generally believed to be so high already that it is a deterrent to new industry.

There is little chance that an increase in the personal income tax would be approved by any future Legislature, as long as the Federal income tax is so high. Our State rate is already among the highest in the nation.

It would be politically impossible to increase the sales tax—and virtually impossible to eliminate any of the many exemptions which already have sharply reduced the revenue from that levy.

There remain, of course, some "nuisance taxes" — levies on soft drinks, cigarettes and tobacco products, whisky, etc., but they generally penalize the poor man more than the wealthy man and thus are also politically unpopular.

There is, of course, one big source of revenue not tapped now. That is a State tax on land, which we abolished in 1933. It is about the most unpopular tax North Carolina has ever had, and it is inconceivable that Governor Scott, who emphasizes the rural side of our development, would ever consent to a renewal of the ad valorem tax.

• • • •

THERE is still another angle. Our general fund receipts, based as they are on the income and sales taxes, have been the highest in history in recent years because of the great wartime and postwar prosperity. Our revenue system is extremely sensitive to fluctuations in business conditions, and a period of recession such as we appear to be entering upon can only mean a drop in revenue.

In view of the recently published figures showing the steady drop in employment in North Carolina, and considering the general business conditions prevailing throughout the nation, *it is entirely possible that general fund revenue during the next biennium will be below estimates, and that the $5 million deficit will become even larger.*

• • • •

NOW what does all this mean? Simply that the people of North Carolina are being asked to approve the State's assumption of a potentially vast new financial obligation which, in all probability, will require either (1) new and higher State taxes, or (2) the reduction of present general fund expenditures. Since the major portion of general fund money is now spent to support the nine-months school term, the current State educational program will be hit the hardest if this latter solution is adopted.

This is not alarmist propaganda. It is simply a realistic appraisal of the new educational venture we are being asked to approve, an appraisal which the proponents of the $25 million school bond issue have not given the people of this state.

And it is important that the voters realize, when they go to the polls on June 4, that no provision has yet been made for retiring these bonds, and that in voting for them, they may be voting for new taxes in coming years.

A MIDDLE GROUND

AT the very heart of all the hubbub and furore over our atomic energy program with its side attractions like the Fretadt incident—is a fundamental question: Which is the better guarantor of our security: secrecy or superiority?

Are we to place ability at anti-espionage above scientific brilliance? Are we to permit that our atomic energy program be entrusted to grim watchdogs at the possible sacrifice of intellectual initiative and enterprise?

Why, you might ask, can't we expect both?

We can, of course. And presumably we have both so far. And such minor incidents as the granting of an AEC scholarship to an admitted Communist and the loss of a minute quantity of fissionable material scarcely reflect carelessness when one stops to consider the gigantic proportions of the wartime and postwar advancement in the field of atomic energy.

One does not excuse these two slips—one poor judgment, one a minor mishap. The people would prefer there be no slips.

It is rather the alarm and hysteria over atomic energy, stirred up by these incidents and magnified by the huge microscope of international affairs and national politics through which the atomic energy program is scrutinized, that should be of concern to the whole nation.

It is a kind of hysteria that, unbridled and unchecked, may lead us further into the dangerous realm of thought control. We have already been impelled in that direction by the tenuous undeclared cold war against Russia which has made it difficult for us to settle an issue which would be crystal clear if we were actually at war with Russia—the fundamental rights of Communists under our Constitution.

We have been impelled in that direction by the revelation of Communist creeds and activities during the New York trial . . . by the Judy Coplon arrest . . . by Hans Freistadt.

We have gone so far as to entertain seriously a suggestion that the FBI be required to compile a dossier on every man who is given any sort of U. S. Government scholarship, certainly no more than one step removed from a police state.

We have stopped to listen, without denouncing it for what it is, a proposal by Senator Cain that atomic energy be taken away from civilian control and invested in the military.

We are frightened and panicky, and ridiculously so. We have reached the point where conformity is the overriding virtue, where an inquisitive mind is a thing of suspicion, where courage of convictions is no longer an admirable trait.

It is hard for us to realize that continued exhaltation of conformity can only produce mediocrity, that in our frenzy for secrecy, we may drive off the giants of science who are the only men able to keep us continually ahead of the rest of the world in atomic energy, and thus afford us our only real security.

Somewhere there is a middle ground, a sensible sort of national psychology, more in keeping with our traditions and our strength, than is this 1949 hysteria. We must find it—and stick to it.

From The New York Daily Mirror

ROAD BOND PAY-OFF

SAID Governor Dewey, urging a pay-as-you-go policy in government:

"Back in the 1860's Borough fathers decreed a new road for what is now Central Avenue in the Bronx. It was to be the latest thing—a plank road. The fathers sold bonds for that plank road at seven per cent interest. The plank road rotted away and Central Avenue had to be paved. It probably has been repaved many times since. But today, decades after the plank road is forgotten, the City of New York is still paying seven per cent interest on those bonds and it will continue to pay seven per cent interest until the bonds are retired—in the year 2147.

"That plank road originally cost $390,000. When the last bond is retired, it will have cost the people three million dollars."

———

Now we know why big stores have started putting in escalators. They knew derned well that the parents of small boys could be stuck on the things long enough for their sales resistance to weaken. — *Greenville (S. C.) Piedmont.*

Stewart Alsop

What Is Left

CANTON

IN the present situation in China, it is first important to realize that the National Government's resistance to the Communists is virtually at an end. Second, however, it is also important to realize that in this still semi-feudal country, major local centers of resistance to the Communists will survive long after the last plump Kuomintang official has skedaddled for his life.

The geographical location of these local resistance centers is of the utmost strategic interest to the United States. First, of course, is the island stronghold which Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek has already prepared himself on Formosa.

As has been previously pointed out in this space, it is vital to safeguard Formosa, which is the key to our own Japan-Okinawa-Philippines defense line in the Pacific. Then besides Formosa, the other Chinese resistance centers may be catalogued as follows:

1. Kwangsi Province lies west of Canton astride the Canton-Hankow railroad. For decades, it has been the domain of acting President Le Tsung-jen and his partner, the able Gen. Pai Chung-hsi. Thence Li and Pai sallied forth, with a huge armed retinue, to camp in Nanking until they had persuaded Chiang Kai-Shek to declare war on Japan. Thence Pai led the Kwangsi armies into the national struggle. And thence Li and Pai have now returned. Pai has already moved his main headquarters back to the province. It is rugged country. The troops are good fighters. The people are loyal to their leaders. This will be a hard nut for the Communists to crack.

2. The province of Yunnan, which has the great war-time air force base of Kupming for its capital, is strategically the most important area of the Chinese mainland. It shares borders with, and commands the Chinese approaches into, both Indo-China and Burma. If Yunnan fell into Communist hands, the Chinese Communists can link up with their Indo-Chinese and Burmese brethren.

No Chinese province is more backward or complex than Yunnan. The strongest man is still the former Governor, old Lung Yun, the immensely rich old rebel who was arrested four years ago by the Generalissimo, then secretly rescued by Maj. Gen. C. L. Chennault from Nanking. But Lung has not reestablished his home power. His brother-in-law, Gen. Lu Han, the official ruler of Yunnan, has retired in defeat to his Kunming palace. The province is ravaged by bandits. Who are partly inspired by the Communists. The place has, indeed, only one defense.

IMPREGNABLE YUNNAN

Geography makes Yunnan almost impregnable. It is an immensely high plateau, pitted with rich valleys, bristling with high mountains. There are only two feasible routes of attack—an appalling road from the north and an even more dreadful road from the east. Only a few divisions can hold Yunnan—if a few divisions can be got together.

3. The province of Szechaun, above the Yangtze gorges, was the old fortress against the Japanese. Its immense agricultural wealth derives from the great Chengtu plain, still watered by the irrigation works built by the first universal emperor in the third century B. C. Its 60,000,000 inhabitants make this mere province a nation within a nation. And it can be reached only through grim mountains from the north, or up the terrible Yangtze gorges from the east.

Here again, the power is atomized. The former Governor, and former Prime Minister of China, Chang Chun, is an important figure. So is the great landowner, Liu Wen-hui. There are several others. There are also considerable numbers of Szechuanese troops, owing various allegiances. The defense of Szechaun will be inexpensive, as Chiang Kai-shek proved at Chungking. But the question really is whether any defense will be organized.

TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

4. Last but not least are the northwest provinces, infinitely remote, fantastically rugged and dominated by a tough, hard-fighting Moslem minority. The Northwestern Chinese Moslems are in turn dominated by the Ma Clan, who have about 80,000 men under arms and assert they could put another 200,000 in the field if they had the equipment. Even with their 80,000, the Mas have already cut the Communist armies to ribbons "in five successive engagements. They say they will never surrender, and there is better reason to believe them than most of the Southern warlords who make the same claim.

This about completes the list. Possibly the Communists will mop up these pockets of resistance one by one. On the other hand, it is also possible that the Chinese feudal leaders will defend their lairs for a long time. And it is certainly in the immediate American interest — the hard, practical American interest — that this time should be as long as possible.

People's Platform

More Anent Road Bonds

BURLINGTON

Editors, THE NEWS:

WITH all of the pro and con discussions pertaining to our highway system and approaching road bonds election, I have nowhere seen all of the "facts and figures" published in condensed form.

Let's take a look at these figures beginning with the year 1921 when the first road bonds were issued. From 1921 to 1927 we issued a total of $115 million. The last of these bonds will mature in 1953, or 22 years later. During this period, we will have paid out a total of $89 million in interest. From 1921 to 1948 we spent a total of $926 million dollars on our highway system, or nearly one billion. It is reported that 80 per cent of our population lives within one mile of a hard surfaced road.

It is estimated that the road revenue for the ensuing four years will total $253 million. Let's deduct 10 per cent for possible decline, or $23 million, thus leaving $255 million. On May 1—this month—we had a surplus in the road fund of $39 million, thus making a total of $294 million, less estimated road upkeep for the next four years of $88 million, leaving a net surplus of $206 million. The real question for the citizens of North Carolina to consider is what are we going to do with this $206 millions?

If we add an additional $200 million for a total of $406 million, then we will have available to spend during the next four years almost half as much as we have spent during the last 27 years.

If we spend only the estimated amount available of $206 million during the next four years, at the end of this period (1953), all of our road bonds will have been paid in full and the entire highway revenue will be available for expanding our road system on a "pay as we go" basis, and very important, we will have eliminated the obligation of $40 million in interest on the bonds we now propose to issue.

Most of us in our various experiences have found it easy to borrow but, at times, we have found it difficult to pay back.

As at matter of comparison, according to published records during last year—1948—New York State spent $8.75 per capita, Pennsylvania $13.24 and North Carolina $18.45 on their highway systems. This looks like we are out-doing two of the wealthiest states in the nation. The people of North Carolina must decide whether it will be good business to go even further in road spending than our two richest states.

—J. E. BAKER.

Letter Draws Fire

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

THE comment of Garret Baxter on "The Spell of Roosevelt" is just about as senseless and nauseating as anything we have seen in print. If he read the articles in Life Magazine several months ago giving the opinions of the professors of history in 35 of the leading universities of the United States classifying all Presidents of this country up to the present time, he will find Franklin D. Roosevelt ranking third in the class of great Presidents. The next classification is of the near great, the third is average and the fourth, below average.

His comments on banking interests and financiers accentuates his ignorance of economics.

Undoubtedly he has been taking his cue from that chief of truckmakers, Westbrook Pegler, who cannot write a column without a nasty slur at the Roosevelt family. I think his column has long since ceased to be read by but a very few.

—BOYCE WHISNANT.

Academic Anarchy

OXFORD

Editors, THE NEWS:

IT strikes me that academic freedom at many of our institutions of learning, particularly at Chapel Hill, has been translated into academic anarchy. As an alumnus of the University of North Carolina it both hurts and humiliates me to know that we not only have Communists there, but Communists who are vouched for by the authorities and placed in the classrooms as teachers. Certainly it is anomalous to fight Communism abroad and cultivate it here. In fact, it does not make sense.

Frankly, I think a house-cleaning at the aforesaid institution is long overdue, with some fumigation added.

This country must choose and not long hence what type of country we are to have. We can't much longer remain half fish and half fowl, half socialistic and half capitalistic. We must establish a concept of government and remain faithful to that concept.

No one can seriously contend that the capitalistic system is perfect, but it is the best yet devised, I think. More of the things worthwhile and of permanent good to the human race have been attained under this form than any other. On the other hand, history does not furnish an example of a welfare or socialistic state that has not been superceded by a police state and a loss of all freedom. So why try things outmoded and of proven failure wherever tried?

Of course, a Lincoln car is not a perfect machine, but only a fool would junk it for a model-T Ford, or any of the low-priced cars for the T, for that matter. But that is exactly what we are doing with our Government when we are edging into out-moded and burnt-out foreign ideologies such as the welfare, socialistic or communistic concepts of government.

Certainly, there is ample area for academic freedom within the limits of the capitalistic and free-enterprise systems of government. This form is as far advanced over what we are edging into under the current academic freedom doctrine as is the Lincoln over the old T-model Ford. Let's make this car what it is capable of being made and stop cumming up the process by trying to use T-model parts.

—JOHN W. HESTER.

Notices Appreciated

CHAPEL HILL

Editors, THE NEWS:

THE North Carolina Symphony Society wishes to express its appreciation to The Charlotte News for the splendid coverage you gave the Symphony concert in Charlotte this season.

The advance publicity, prior to the concert, was especially fine, and contributed greatly to the success of the concert.

We wish particularly to thank Donald MacDonald for his keen interest in the Symphony, and the grand work he did. Tom Fesperman also deserves both thanks and praise for his work.

Publicizing a concert by the North Carolina Symphony is no problem at all when we have the support and co-operation of such fine newspapers as yours. Again, many thanks for your fine work. It certainly was appreciated.

—MRS. W. O. S. SUTHERLAND JR.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Memorial Day Marks Unfulfilled Pledge

WASHINGTON

MUSINGS on Memorial Day—The nation kneels beside white crosses and beautiful monuments today. . . . At Ansio, Italy, Gen. Mark Clark bows before the graves of boys who five years ago made a famous landing—and the supreme sacrifice. . . . At Guadalcanal, in the Philippines, in France, near Kasserine Pass, there are white crosses, bedecked graves, and heavy hearts. . . . In the Southern states hearts also are heavy—not necessarily on this day, because officially Memorial Day is mourned separately. But in spirit the South will mourn, too. . . . Because Memorial Day has come to mean far more than a day of memory for the heroes of the war between the states; it has really come to be a day to recall our unfulfilled word to those who died to bring peace to the world—or so they thought.

A lot of mothers, a lot of veterans, a lot of fatherless children, a lot of widows will think of that unfulfilled pledge today. We don't think of it on other days, but we do today. . . . Some of them will think of other armistice days, the fever heat, the excitement, the delirious, joyous, uncontrolled excitement of ending war.

There was Pennsylvania Ave. on V-J day, 1945—sailors kissing pretty girls. . . . torn telephone books and ticker tape. . . . Stalled streetcars with nobody caring whether they ran or not . . . A radio blaring forth: "Hirohito explains surrender to the Japanese people." . . . Military police forced to retreat behind the White House gates. Joyous crowds, uncontrolled crowds. . . . Paper, paper, ankle deep. . . . John McCrae's words still ringing from the last war: "If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep." . . . Jimmy Byrnes, the Secretary of State, just returned from Potsdam. Jimmy Byrnes with the weight of moulding the peace of the world upon his shoulders. . . . Crowds milling around the State Dept. They don't know it, and most of them don't care, but upon his statesmanship, his sagacity depends whether they will be celebrating new armistice days, kneeling before more graves.

Then there was Philadelphia in 1918—or any other American city. But I was among those drilling near Philadelphia when crowds came up to the parade ground to say that the Kaiser had fled, Germany had surrendered. . . . Seemed funny at the time not to have anything more to drill for. Like the bottom had dropped out of life. . . . Crowds went wild. . . . Woodrow Wilson was going to Paris. No more wars. The war to end war was over. The war to save democracy had been won. . . .

Woodrow Wilson did go to Paris—and Jimmy Byrnes went to Paris, London and Moscow. I saw him at the Palace of Luxembourg working his head off, keeping calm, trying to reap the results of victory. After Jimmy Byrnes Marshall went to Paris. Now Dean Acheson. All were able, sincere, devoted men—devoted to the cause of peace. . . . But all have failed so far, and Acheson warned before he left that the obstacles were great. He was not too hopeful of success.

However, the American people now realize that peace cannot be obtained solely by negotiation around the green baize tables of diplomatic conferences. For treaties in themselves mean little unless people carry them out. . . . The statesmen who sign treaties may be dead tomorrow. The governments which ratify them may be out of office next week. But the people behind treaties go on forever. . . . That is why the American people have come to work harder and harder at peace. They used to lean back and leave things to diplomats. Now they don't.

When the people of New England load up a ship and send food to England, when other people load up various friendship trains to Europe, when Americans write millions of democracy letters to the Italian people—that's working at peace. And it pays dividends. . . . When the American people pay high taxes to finance a Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe, that's also working at peace. . . . And the work still continues. Wichita, Kansas, quite recently adopted the French city of Orleans. . . . In Jackson, Miss., the R. E. Kennington department store has just donated an American wedding gown to be worn by a bride now living in Lyons, France—in return for the wedding gowns sent this country on the French Gratitude Train. . . . And a stream of letters have been flowing into American cities from France in appreciation of gratitude train gifts, the latest series being from Gov. Garvey of Arizona.

Peace is like matrimony—and the American people have come to realize it. No marriage is successful if two people merely sign a marriage license. And no peace is successful if two or more countries merely sign a peace treaty. . . . Peace must be an everyday living reality. . . . There are no uniforms, no glamor, no brass bands marching down the road to peace. It's an unexciting, humdrum job—just as unexciting as peeling potatoes, which sometimes is so necessary to making a marriage successful.

Moscow now knows the full import of people-to-people friendship—in fact, Stalin probably would have given his eyeteeth to have the French Gratitude Train in reverse—to Moscow instead of the USA. . . . Because he has been boasting that the people of France and Italy and all Europe were the friends of Russia. And we showed him this was not the case. . . . All of which illustrates why Acheson's real job at Paris is to pull up the iron curtain. As long as the American people can't get to know the Russian people, as long as the Kremlin can declare war overnight with no Senate, no press, no church, no public opinion to exercise a restraining force, the danger of war will continue. . . . No treaty with Russia is worth the paper it's written on. We know that from experience. The only worthwhile agreement with Russia is one guaranteed by the seal of friendship of the Russian and American people. That's why it's so necessary to work for the lifting of the iron curtain at Paris.

Hal Boyle

Something To Forget

NEW YORK

THE earth is a tomb of dead armies. And very soon indeed it will swallow the last survivors of the American Civil War.

On this Memorial Day, 84 years after Lee offered his sword in surrender to Grant at Appomattox, only a handful are left.

Just how many no one knows. Life Magazine, after a nation-wide search, discovered a few unlisted by veterans' organizations or state and Federal pension officials. It publishes in its current issue pictures of 30 Union and 38 Confederate survivors.

But before the issue was distributed one of the Union men—William Magee, 102, of Los Angeles—was dead. Each month or so one here, another there, goes to join his spectral comrades in Blue and Gray.

It isn't particularly a tribute to Southern hardihood that there are more Confederates veterans alive. The South, drained of manpower, had to take its soldiers younger, including boy volunteers of ten.

It will be a tremendous event in American history when the last of these grizzled veterans passes, and the grisly Civil War enters into legend. The earth then will hold in silence all of the 2,500,000 or more men who fought in the famous war of brother against brother.

It was probably history's first billion-dollar war. The price was heavy in terms of blood, but that bill was paid long ago. The bill in terms of dollars is still being paid.

The bill for the four-year fight cost the North alone $3,000,000,000, some 110,000 combat dead and 221,791 lives lost by disease. The North eventually also will have paid out an additional $8,000,000,000 in pension and compensation claims before the Federal Government officially closes its book on this fratricidal conflict. A year ago the Veterans Administration still had 16,372 Civil War cases on its rolls, mostly dependents of veterans.

COST NOT KNOWN

What did the war between the states cost the South? Woodrow Wilson, an eminent historian before he became a President, put its battle losses at 133,821 killed and wounded in an army of 600,000. The South had fewer men than the North put into the field. Some 30,153 Confederates died in prison, largely of disease. An equal number of Union soldiers died in Southern prisons.

It is impossible, however, to estimate the monetary cost of the war to the South. Its industries were destroyed, its currency became worthless in rocketing inflation. For years it suffered under occupation by federal troops and Northern carpetbaggers. Defeated Germany had a far milder occupation after two World Wars. There was no Marshall Plan for the American South.

Many Southerners feel their region was set back two generations as a result of the lost war and the subsequent military and political occupation. Ask such a man today what that war cost, and he'll say:

"The South is still paying the price."

The bitterness of the men who fought lived on in their sons. But in the grandsons, the great grandsons, and the great great grandsons — the bitterness is dying or is dead.

And the memorial wreaths today aren't just for the dead of that bitter family fight. They are also for the dead of a reunited family that has fought and won three foreign wars.

The earlier scars are slowly being forgotten. We have deeper scars now to keep us together.