THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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IMMEDIATE SCHOOL NEEDS

THE City and County school boards, knowing full well the size of the building job in the years ahead, are understandably reluctant to adopt half-measures. They would, of course, prefer to determine the minimum essential needs of the two systems for the next four or five years and put the whole project before the voters, even though the amount might be large.

They can not do so, for the County Government simply doesn't have the leeway, under the County Finance Act of 1927, to issue bonds in the amount needed. The Engelhardt survey said the City of Charlotte needs to spend $14 million by 1955, and $8 million or $10 million more in the next five years. The total for both City and County would be much greater.

There are two ways in which the County's borrowing capacity may be increased:

1. If the friendly test suit brought by the City Government to force Mecklenburg County to assume outstanding City school bonds is won, the County's borrowing limit for schools will automatically be boosted from 5 per cent to 8 per cent of its assessed valuation.

2. The countywide property valuation now under way will add millions of unlisted property on the books, thus increasing the total valuation and boosting the borrowing capacity.

But both of these will take time. The test suit may drag on for months. The revaluation won't be completed for at least a year and a half. Meanwhile, the school needs are pressing. City Superintendent Garinger says that preliminary study of next year's enrollment indicates that from one to three more classrooms will be needed in every existing elementary school. Already all the space is taken, and there are double sessions in some schools.

The single package school bond election would be easier to sell to the voters. It could encompass every immediate need, could show what was to be done in each neighborhood of the city. No one would become disgruntled because his school was not included.

Even so, it appears to THE NEWS that the two school boards can not afford to wait longer to get started with the school building job. Some $4 million of $5 million borrowing capacity exists now, and that will care for some of the most pressing needs. Later, when the test suit is ruled upon or when the revaluation is completed, there will be more leeway and the balance of the program can be put before the voters.

We have every confidence that the people of Charlotte will approve an early start on the program, and we believe they will understand the problem if the school authorities explain it to them.

POLITICAL HOSPITALS

EVEN though we don't always agree with the views of Congressman Hamilton C. Jones, we must confess that the gentleman doesn't mind putting himself on record. The latest issue of the impartial *Congressional Quarterly* shows that Mr. Jones voted one way or the other on every one of the 54 House roll call votes between Jan. 3 and March 31 of this year, for an "on record" percentage of 100.

Furthermore, he piled up an "on record" percentage of 86 in the long 1949 session, third highest in the North Carolina delegation.

Congressman Jones was not in Washington on Monday when the House voted to force the Veterans Administration to build 24 new hospitals (including one in Charlotte) and to enlarge fourteen more—all at an estimated cost of $279,000,000. But he put himself on record in an interview with THE NEWS.

"I know from my own personal investigations that the Charlotte hospital is one of the three most urgently needed units in this entire program," he said in approving of the House action.

We make just two observations on Mr. Jones' attitude.

1. If only the "three most urgently needed units" had been authorized, it would be a somewhat different matter. To get those three, the House would build 21 others and enlarge fourteen more.

2. With all due respect for Mr. Jones' opinion, the Veterans Administration and the Chief Executive of the nation, both highly sensitive to the opinion of veterans, are on record as believing the hospitals are not needed, and that they could not be filled with patients or adequately staffed if they were built.

This program smacks strongly of pork-barrel politics. Taxpayers of the Tenth N. C. Congressional District, veterans and non-veterans, will not look kindly on the House action unless the need is substantiated elsewhere than in the mind of Mr. Jones.

LOCAL INITIATIVE

UNDER most favorable conditions, the food business, wholesale and retail, is a highly competitive, often vexatious way to make a living. Profit margins are narrow. Perishables are a problem. Fluctuating prices can quickly cause heavy inventory losses.

It is not a business to be undertaken lightly, but rather requires an unusual combination of imagination, ingenuity, alertness, and plenty of plain hard work.

All of these attributes are in evidence in the steady growth and continued prosperity of the Dixie Wholesale & Retail Meat Co. which opens a mammoth new supermarket here today.

In an era when the large, capably managed chain food stores dominate the field, here are local and independent merchants matching them at their own game in the gruelling competition for the customer's favor.

In an age when fear and uncertainty about our troubled domestic and foreign affairs are diverting the attention of so many of us, and weakening our purpose, here are businessmen who have full confidence in the essential stability of the American economic system and the continued expansion of their own geographical area.

In a time when one full newspaper page is considered a sizable food advertisement, here is a local company telling the story of its formal opening in a record-breaking 32-page merchandising section, telling it in the way best calculated to reach the consumer.

We are sure that the whole community will join in wishing continued success to a local enterprise which has such great vision and courage.

From The Atlanta Constitution

THE MORAL OF BEN MASSELL

BEN MASSELL'S fellow-builders and realtors gave him a testimonial dinner Tuesday night. It was merited for many reasons, one of them being that Ben has kept at least some of the boys in a prosperous condition by his $30,000,000 worth of building.

The story was American—and one the smug, the Kluxers and the Communists ought to read. Ben Massell was brought to this country from Lithuania in 1888. He was educated here. His first job paid him $1.50 a week. Today he has built 1,000 business structures, 10 apartment buildings, and currently has $6,000,000 of construction under way.

The Communists say there is no opportunity and that the poor are exploited in America. And some are, and have been. But opportunity remains. As long as this country provides opportunity for those who will work and who have ability and brains we will remain strong.

The Kluxer mentality tries to carve down the meaning of America to their own narrow "Americanism", which is really un-Americanism. You could put every KKK member into a pot, boil them down and from the tallow and bile left, you couldn't mold one man who would be as good an American as foreign-born Ben Massell or one who has contributed a fraction as much to his country.

There is another point, too, that comes to us.

Ben Massell is the only builder we know who could, if he choose, protest about Federal "interference" in the construction field. He has done all his building through private enterprise. We take a dim view of those builders who take advantage of every possible Federal loan, guarantee, insurance provision, and other subsidies, direct or indirect, and who then squawk about public housing and slum clearance in the fields which private enterprise has not entered and apparently is not interested in taking on.

If fellows like Massell want to say something we will listen. But somehow the fellow who has loaded his own wagon with Federal benefits seems to be talking through his hat when he protests Federal participation.

How it stands on the world money market we don't know but word from the nearest vending machine is that the penny has just been devaluated to 23 salted peanuts.—*Jackson (Miss.) Daily News.*

Our favorite spy remains the blonde Marlene Dietrich in the old film "Dishonored" —the one in which Marlene leaned against a door-frame and a cat leaned against Marlene's lovely legs.—*Jackson (Miss.) Daily News.*

One thing no man needs to worry about after income tax—and that's the money his wife will spend for her Easter hat. She bought it back in February.—*Frankfort (Ky.) State Journal.*

As inadequate as the apology of one of these nationally known columnists when he's wrong.—*Elizabethtown (Ky) News.*

'You See? U. S. Senators Themselves Say This'

Defense Dept. Funds Slash Could Stop Expensive Waste

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON

THAT old expression about a new broom sweeping clean could apply to the changes that are taking place in the Defense Establishment. Thomas K. Finletter is taking over as Secretary of the Air Force and Stuart Symington as head of the National Security Resources Board.

Some time ago in this space it was stated that defense funds spent on the Air National Guard were to a considerable degree wasted. The amount being spent this year is $114,000,000 and the figure asked for 1951 is $103,935,000.

A number of Air National Guard officers have written to me to challenge this statement. They protest that they are honestly trying to contribute to America's defense, and they undoubtedly are. They want to know on what basis of expert knowledge I passed this judgment.

I was not, of course, trying to give any personal judgment because I do not have the expert knowledge to make such a judgment. I was reporting the opinions of high-ranking officers of all three services. Air Force officers might, as the National Guard maintains, be jealous of the independence of the Air National Guard. But the same opinion is expressed in private by men in the other services with expert knowledge of the nation's over-all defense needs and how they are being met. The Gray board after a careful and exhaustive investigation recommended against independence for the Air National Guard.

SERIOUS MATTER

Quite apart from the money being spent, this is a serious matter. For the defense of America the Air Force in being includes the air groups of the Air National Guard. If those groups do not measure up to standards of efficiency and performance, then our defenses are weaker than we think.

In all probability some of the groups do measure up to the standards rigidly enforced in the Air Force. But a further check makes it pretty clear that many do not; that some groups are hardly more than holiday occasions for World War II airmen who like to fly.

In Virginia charges were brought against Maj. L. H. Waters Jr., commanding officer of the Virginia Air National Guard. He was accused by officers in his command of a whole series of irregularities concerning the use of Guard planes and Government property. Waters' response was to dismiss the complaining officers and he was promptly cleared by the adjutant-general of the state.

At the same time Civil Aeronautics Administrator D. W. Rentzel issued a complaint against Waters charging 24 separate violations of civil air regulations. Most of the violations charged occurred while Waters was leading an acrobatic team flying F-47s in a series of air shows at county fairs around the state. Waters was pilot of the National Guard plane that former Gov. William M. Tuck used during his term of office.

Numerous instances have been reported of the way in which Governors use National Guard planes for their private and personal use. When Gov. James (Kissing Jim) Folsom of Alabama was paying court to one of the daughters of Gov. Earl Warren he flew to California and back in a Guard plane. The cost of flying that plane is estimated conservatively at $120 an hour.

The National Guard Bureau is hardly in a position to rebuke Governors who have Air Guard funds spent on putting plush interiors in planes they have for their personal use. Maj. Gen. Kenneth F. Cramer, chief of the National Guard Bureau, had $68,000 spent on converting a plane for his own use. It should be added that part of this went into radio equipment rather than plush.

The new Secretary for Air must look into all the corners. If money is being wasted, he must stop the waste even though he offends the sensibilities of some sensitive politicians.

Collected By Bill Sharpe

TURPENTINE DRIPPINGS

Ag'in It

(Franklin Press)

At its recent convention, the North Carolina Education Association called for yet higher salaries for teachers.

We're ag'in it! And here's why:

When the convention adjourned, the teachers went home without knowing who their officers were—teachers assigned to the job hadn't been able to count all the ballots.

Then it was announced that one of the two candidates for president had been elected by a margin of fourteen ballots. Later, an announcement said that was all wrong, the other candidate had won, by a margin of eighteen.

Now it develops that one of the troubles is the counters couldn't read some of the ballots.

Yes, sir, we're ag'in raising teachers salaries. Let 'em learn to write and count first!

* * *

Showed That Tinhorn

(Sanford Herald)

Most dairy farmers are thoroughly conscious of the need to keep their cows and barns in tiptop sanitary condition, says Ken Harmon, farm agent, but it was not always easy to get their co-operation in years gone by.

Harmon said a couple of extension service representatives were making a farm survey once and stepped into a man's barn at milking time. The barn hadn't been cleaned for a month. The man eyed the extension agents suspiciously.

"You fellers ain't State inspectors, are you?"

They assured him of their innocence.

"Well, it's a good thing, or I'd have thrown you out. One of them birds was in here just last week. He said I ought to have concrete floors.

"That shows how little them tinhorn experts from college know. I grabbed a shovel and all I had to do was dig down six inches to show him he didn't know what he was talking about. I got concrete floors."

* * *

Providence

(H. C. McFayden, State Magazine)

Maybe it's so that the Lord
Orders EVER' little thing
In our lives.

Does look like, though,
Somebody else's sunders
Might of broke in church
Besides the PREACHER'S.

* * *

Want Some Figures?

(Rocky Mount Telegram)

Do you want to pore over some figures? These contained in the following, which was compiled by a Mississippi bank in the form of an advertisement and passed on to us via the Elizabethtown, Ky., News not only afford millions of headaches, but also tend to show just what a sad state this country is getting itself into:

The President and the Congress are sweating over a $42,400,000,000 Federal Budget for 1951, which is more money than the average breadwinner can comprehend.

If every person in the United States would cash in his life insurance it would be worth about $44,000,000,000. If every owner of a city residence in the Republic sold his property it would total only $30,000,000,000. If all the farmers sold out their farms, lock, stock and barrel, it would provide only $25,000,000,000 and if all the industries in the nation converted their net working capital into cash, that would bring only $39,000,000,000 or enough to run the Federal Government for only eleven months.

* * *

Merits Of Senility

(Dunn Dispatch)

Tall farmer said to fat farmer, "I never thought I would see the time when a worn-out old plug mule would sell for more cash money than a nice fat young mule." Fat farmer replied, "It seems that mules are used mostly for pulling tobacco sleds on many farms. The old well-broken mule does a better job there than the young mule full of energy."

* * *

That's Telling Him

(Sanford Herald)

A father spanked his young son and daughter for disobedience just before they were put to bed one night.

The next morning when the father got up and started out he found a note tacked on his door which read, "Be good to your children and they will be good to you. God."

* * *

Visual Education

(Montgomery Herald)

At Rochelle, New Jersey, and other points, studies have been made of the effect of television on school children. It is found that children who have television sets in their homes or regularly see television in the homes of their friends have dropped fifteen per cent in their school grades.

* * *

Oh !

(Geo. Beasley Jr., Montgomery Herald)

A small but pugilistic friend of mine explaining how he suffered several cracked ribs, said: "A fellow told me to shut up and I thought he said stand up."

* * *

His Nickel

(Jim Parker, Chatham News)

We heard recently about the little boy whose father gave him two nickels, one to put in the collection plate at Sunday School and one to buy an ice cream cone after Sunday School. On the way to church that fine Sunday morning he dropped one of the nickels and it rolled into the gutter and out of reach.

Looking up at the heavens, the little boy sighed and shook his head. "Sorry, Lord, but there goes your nickel," he said.

Congress Is Agin' Sin, All Right, But To What Extent?

By ROBERT C. RUARK

WASHINGTON

THIS Congress of ours is really having a year for itself. Already it has come flatly out against sin, is momentarily on the record against crime, and is beating the brains out of gambling. Yessiree, Buster, our boys are strictly out there with the lance, and no windmill is safe on its hill.

Let us consider gambling today. Gambling is something that Sen. Homer Capehart is going to stamp out if it takes until Christmas. By Christmas I mean Christmas of the year 2060. The Senator is going to stamp out gambling by stamping out the communications facilities which make it possible to transmit gambling information over state boundaries. He also proposes to have Bookie Frank Erickson and Joe Adonis down to bare their souls for the benefit of Congress. I can just see Joey A. giving a flock of rapt Congressmen the deep lowdown on gambling in the U. S. Mob guys are all lineal descendents of the clam. That is how they stay alive.

I can tell Sen. Capehart one way of stopping horse gambling. You close all the horse tracks — shrieks "Oh no! not that! Anything but that!" — from all the politicans who get the cuts from the bookies and the taxes from the track. Close Laurel, Havre de Grace and Charles Town, as an object lesson to Congressmen who patronize them.

Then shoot all the horses in the country who cannot prove that they were never affiliated with a racing saddle or were never ridden by an undersized grown man with strong wrists. Then make all the cops give back all the money they have taken from bookmakers. For the Senator's benefit, the shake in New York now is $200 a day, six days a week, for a bookie to stay in business. That is $1200 a week the cops get and free whisky for the beat private, to boot.

Then return all the political contributions that the big gamblers have made to campaigns of the Democratic party. Did I hear anybody say "Ouch!" especially from my second home, Louisiana?

Then make it a Federal crime to be a horse, to associate with a horse, or with people who associate with horses. And we are merely started.

Having purged the horses, we begin with baseball. Wipe out baseball. More money is bet on it annually, through bookies and personalities, than on horses. Then wipe out basketball, and college football, which embraces a greater betting racket than horses. Make professional football illegal, and remove temptation from the college athletes who go to military schools when a war is on and then quit the service to play ball.

Now let us inspect the ancient game of stud poker, and the gentle art of craps. Craps, Senator, was played with little cubes of ivory, with little specks on them. In the absence of ivory I have seen sailors use cube sugar with burnt-match dots. If on the first roll, you hit a seven or an eleven, you win. Snake eyes and a trey beat you, and so do tours. Boxcars are two sets of six, or twelve.

To ban craps from the land you will have to shoot nearly all newspaper executives. I was in a spirited game with some of the big talent of the land just the other night, Senator, and right under your nose. You will never be able to stop crap-shooting so long as newspaper editors foregather to figure out how to run the world. The same applies to stud poker, although I will endorse a merry killing of the practitioners of Boy Scout poker, which has deuces, trey, jacks, queens, one-eyed jacks wild and a wild card in the middle for everybody to share.

After we have wiped out most of the nation in an attempt to control gambling, I still got news for you. So long as two humans remain on the globe they will find something to gamble at, and things to gamble with. You might check on this when Joey A. comes down to tell you that he hasn't got the faintest idea of what you're talking about.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Florida Duplicates Dewey-Truman Fight

WASHINGTON,

TODAY'S column is going to make my name mud with a lot of my good friends, the newspaper publishers of Florida. For one of the most interesting Senatorial campaigns in the nation is going on in their state, with 90 per cent of the newspapers batting hard for one candidate. And when you see all the boys ganging up on one side, I can't resist the good old American custom of seeing what's to be said on the other side.

The Florida election battle is not only a lollipaloosa, but it has all the earmarks of another Dewey-Truman campaign.

On one side, and fighting for his life is gnarled, weather-beaten Sen. Claude Pepper with fourteen years in the Senate at stake, with his chief financial support from labor, and waging an effective, tireless, whistle-stop campaign almost identical to Truman's Like Truman's, it is aimed at offsetting the solid wall of bad publicity given him by the press.

On the other side is popular, handsome Congressman George Smathers, with four years in Congress, whose chief financial support has come from big-money Republicans who spend their Winters in Florida and register as nominal Democrats. No mean campaigner himself, Smathers has made a lot of political hay.

The Dewey-Truman comparison is so striking that it caused the staid New York Times to comment:

"The Senatorial challenger is a young and handsome man with a rich, well-trained voice, and a reporter might almost imagine he was back on the victory special listening to a rear-platform speech by Gov. Thomas E Dewey.

Echoes Of Dewey Train

THE content of the speeches is almost identical. Communism is the main issue . . . And like Gov. Dewey, Rep. Smathers is seeking election without outlining in any detail the programs and policies he would follow if elected.

"Another echo of the Dewey train," continues The Times, "is that reporters traveling with Mr. Smathers complain because he uses the same speech every day and they are finding it hard after five weeks to find a 'new lead' for the next day's papers."

But since few Floridians read The New York Times, most Florida newspaper readers get the impression that Claude Pepper is not only Stalin's closest buddy but that he is already a gone gosling.

Just to add to his bad press, The Saturday Evening Post, long a force in Republican politics, deftly scheduled a feature story on Pepper's opponent just ten days before the Florida primary.

Straight GOP-Demo Fight

REAL fact about the Pepper-Smathers fight, however, is that it's a straight, down-the-line Republican-Democratic battle. When you get away from all the dust-throwing, the issues are clear and clean-cut as between the Truman liberals and the Republican conservatives. This is probably a healthy thing, because ordinarily an election in Florida doesn't mean much beyond a choice of personalities.

Long ago young Smathers began conferring with ex-Speaker Joe Martin, leading Republican in the House of Representatives. Long ago, he quietly began accumulating GOP money and GOP support.

And as that support accumulated, Smathers began swinging over to the Republican side of the Congressional aisle. When he first came to Congress, Smathers was hailed as the liberal Sir Galahad of the South. But gradually he began voting the opposite.

While casting his vote against slum clearance, he simultaneously promoted the real estate lobby's idea of increasing the amount they could borrow from Uncle Sam up to $750,000. Thus Smathers voted to deny the poor man low-cost housing, but give the big real estate operator the right to use three-quarters of a million dollars of the taxpayers' money, 90 per cent guaranteed by Uncle Sam.

Smathers also voted against social security for traveling salesmen and others, against the minimum wage, and, perhaps most important of all, for the bottling of bills in the Rules Committee instead of open debate on the floor of the House.

Stalin's Pal

MOST interesting issue in the Florida battle, however, is Smathers' charge that Pepper is a pal of Joe Stalin's. He says—to quote The Saturday Evening Post—that "by the Summer of 1945" he, Smathers, was convinced someone should run against Pepper; that "he couldn't get out of his crew that Pepper had become so involved with Henry Wallace."

The real fact, however, is that well after the Summer of 1945—on Jan. 16, 1946, to be exact—Smathers wrote a letter to Pepper's secretary referring to "our good friend Henry Wallace."

It was also after the Summer of 1945, when he now says he decided Pepper must be defeated, that Smathers actually was writing Pepper a stream of letters asking his aid in getting him out of the Marines, in getting him a job as assistant U. S. attorney, and later in helping him run for Congress.

In other words, Smathers was largely built up by the unsuspecting Senator whom he is now trying to defeat.

To read The Saturday Evening Post's glowing account of George Smathers' wartime service, one would think that the Justice Dept. was clamoring to hire him and that the Florida public couldn't wait for him to get out of the Marines and run for Congress. But the letters which the young Marine Corps officer wrote to Pepper (Claude) tell a different story. They show how Smathers wanted to get out of the Marines while the Japanese war was still on, and even asked Pepper to hold up a naval improvement at Key West so his opponent, Congressman Cannon, would not get an edge on him.

Despite this, Smathers now tells Florida voters how, in the Fall of 1945—the exact time he was pleading with Pepper for help—he got disgusted with Pepper's stand on Russia and decided he should be defeated.

It was in the Summer of 1945, just after Truman conferred with Stalin at Potsdam that Pepper also conferred with Stalin, later writing an interview widely published in the metropolitan press.

Pepper probably regrets that interview more than anything else in his political life. But at that time many people were visiting Moscow and it was not considered a crime to urge USA-USSR co-operation.

The payoff is that on April 22, 1946, six months after Pepper's much-touted interview, George Smathers himself said: "We have got to work with Russia and all the nations of the world if we are going to work out a satisfactory peace."